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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventieth year

Identical letters dated 25 March 2015 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Global hopes for peace have been further diminished by recent confirmations of the Israeli Prime Minister's anti-peace stance. His blatant rejection of the two-State solution endorsed for decades by the international community, along with his racist rant against the Palestinian-Arab citizens of Israel and the inflammatory rhetoric of his extremist cohorts, indicate the depth of Israel's intransigence and contempt for international law, human rights and the fundamental principles of democracy, equality and justice.

The words of Israeli leaders continue to translate directly into unlawful and inhumane deeds, causing more suffering and loss for the Palestinian people under nearly half a century of belligerent military occupation. The critical situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem — the territory constituting the State of Palestine — continues to deteriorate as illegal and punitive measures by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people continue apace. This toxic combination of developments at the political, security and humanitarian levels should be cause for alarm and should prompt urgent international action to prevent further destabilization and salvage the minimal prospects for peace before it is too late.

The escalation of illegal measures by the occupying Power, along with other emerging and worrying trends, are inflaming tensions and portend the explosion of yet another deadly cycle of violence, further endangering innocent civilian lives. Every single day, Palestinian civilians are attacked by the occupying forces and settler terrorists; Palestinian civilians are detained and arrested, with more than 107 Palestinians, including children, arrested in just the last week; collective punishment measures suffocate Palestinian movement and socioeconomic life; and Palestinian homes and properties are demolished and land is seized, with specific intensity in Occupied East Jerusalem and surrounding areas (so-called Area C) and

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Al-Khalil. During just one week, occupying forces demolished 30 Palestinian properties, including residences, forcibly displacing 78 Palestinians, as well as an electricity network, a factory, animal barns, water wells and a reservoir.

This is all part of a systematic campaign to oppress and dehumanize the Palestinian people and make their lives unbearable and their presence on their land untenable. All of this is aimed at facilitating the occupying Power's central — and blatant — objective of colonizing and de facto annexing more Palestinian land, in total contradiction to the Israeli Government's past pledges, which have turned out to be empty, and the international community's repeated demands to end this illegitimate occupation. Even a brief review of the recent period confirms these facts.

Israel continues to target Palestinian civilians with lethal force, in gross violation of international humanitarian and human rights law. On 11 March, a Palestinian fisherman, Tawfiq Abu Rayyala, aged 25, was shot and killed by the occupying forces while on his boat off the coast of the Gaza Strip, well within the permitted six-mile nautical zone. The killing of this young man comes amid almost daily attacks on fishermen that threaten their lives and livelihoods, which have already been undermined by Israel's punitive measures, especially its illegal, inhumane blockade, which has devastated the humanitarian conditions and coping abilities of the 1.8 million Palestinians in Gaza, the majority of them Palestine refugees, who also continue to suffer gravely from the enduring impact of Israel's wanton aggression and destruction of last summer.

Violent Israeli military raids and attacks against peaceful civilian protesters also continue to be routinely carried out throughout Palestine. In just the past week, more than 40 Palestinian civilians were injured, among them 13 children. According to Defense for Children International-Palestine, since the start of this year, occupying forces have shot at least 30 Palestinian children with live ammunition, critically wounding many, further traumatizing children and deepening the pervasive sense of insecurity among the civilian population as a whole.

Some recent incidents include the events that follow. On 10 March, Israeli occupying forces assaulted and injured seven Palestinian university students in Bir Zeit in the West Bank during a protest on the one-year anniversary of the killing of their classmate by the occupation forces. On 15 March, 11 Palestinians were injured when occupying forces attacked civilians in Nabi Saleh protesting the construction of Israel's illegal annexation wall. On 15 and 17 March, occupying forces shot at Palestinian farmers in an area east of Khan Younis in Gaza and in an area east of Gaza City. On 18 March, occupying forces shot at Palestinian civilians, injuring nine people, at Al Jalazoun refugee camp, during a protest against the construction of a wall between the camp and the nearby illegal Israeli settlement of "Beit El". On 20 March, occupying forces attacked protesters opposed to the wall in Kufur Qaddoum near Qalqilya, in Nil'in near Ramallah and in Bethlehem, injuring five Palestinians, including a 13-year-old child, and one journalist. On 20 March, occupying forces shot and injured two Palestinians in the town of Absan in southern Gaza. On 23 March, Israeli soldiers injured an 11-year-old Palestinian boy in a village near Bethlehem after repeatedly kicking and punching him.

At the same time, extremist settlers continue to terrorize the Palestinian people and to seize and destroy Palestinian property, including Muslim and Christian holy sites, with increasing depravity throughout the West Bank, including in Occupied East Jerusalem. They continue to be incited to terrorism by political and religious

leaders whose provocations know no bounds, and here I must draw attention to recent Israeli intelligence reports that extremist Jewish rabbis are inciting settlers in yeshivas to commit acts of terror and violence, including at least 20-30 settlers who are being prepared to carry out suicide attacks.

In this regard, I am compelled to reiterate the call for protection for the Palestinian people. International humanitarian law and the commitments undertaken for the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict, including children and women, must be upheld as a matter of urgency in the State of Palestine, where civilian lives are under constant threat by the occupying Power, which has not only grossly abrogated its obligations but also clearly abdicated them.

We call again on the international community, particularly the Security Council, to act immediately to end Israel's impunity and resolve this conflict, which clearly constitutes a threat to international peace and security. The Israeli occupation must end and the Palestinian people must realize justice and their inalienable rights, including to self-determination and freedom. The Palestinian leadership will continue to use all legitimate, peaceful means to achieve these goals. The Council thus cannot continue to be absolved of its responsibilities and must act urgently to avert the further destabilization of this situation, with its far-reaching consequences for regional and international stability and the prospects for realizing a just and lasting peace in accordance with international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

This letter is in follow-up to our 539 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 27 February 2015 (A/ES-10/675-S/2015/149) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed against the Palestinian people by Israel, the occupying Power, for which it must be held accountable and the perpetrators be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the
State of Palestine to the United Nations